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A T T E M P T

To prove that a

Free and Open Trade

B E T W E E N

The Kingdom of *Ireland*

And all the PORTS of the

Southern Coasts of England

W O U L D B E

Highly advantageous to both Kingdoms:

A N D A L S O

That the Reasons hitherto offer'd for shutting up
those Ports are false and delusive, inconsistent with
National Prudence or Policy, being all founded in
Error and Mistake.

In a LETTER to the Worshipful the
MAYOR and CHAMBER of

The CITY of *EXETER.*

By a truly impartial Hand.

E X O N:

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A
LETTER

To the Worshipful the
MAYOR and CHAMBER
OF THE
City of *EXETER*.

GENTLEMEN,



It is with the utmost De-
ference and Respect I ad-
dress you in this *Publick*
Manner. The IMPORT-
TANCE OF THE SUB-
JECT shall be my only Apology. And
as you have the Honour to be in the

Magistracy and Government of the City, you must give me Leave to look on you, not only as Conservators of the *Publick Peace* and *Quiet*, but also that you are oblig'd, by Virtue of your *Character* and *Office*, frequently to examine into the *State* and *Condition* of the City, and to do every Thing, both in your *Corporate* and *Private Capacity*, that may contribute to the HONOUR, REPUTATION, and TRADE thereof.

It has been a Matter of some Doubt with me, whether the City of *Exeter* is in a declining State or not; or whether, at any former Period of Time, the Trade thereof has been more Considerable than at this present Juncture. But, as I am not a Native of the City, I look'd upon myself not so capable of determining with any Degree of Certainty on this *Important Point*; and therefore, for my own private Amusement, I apply'd to sundry judicious Persons,

Persons, who were well acquainted with the City and its Trade for thirty or forty Years past : And I found those Gentlemen all concur and agree in Opinion, *That our City had been gradually declining for the Space of thirty Years*; and confirm'd their respective Opinions by alledging, ' that the Number of our Inhabitants were lessen'd ' a great many Thousands of what ' they were at that Time, and also ' that there never were such a great ' Number of Houses unoccupied as ' now; and further, that the Rents ' of Houses in every Part of the Town ' (the little Spot without *Southgate* ' only excepted) were sunk full one ' Third, and in many Parts of the ' Town one Half, to the very great ' Loss of the respective Owners and ' Proprietors.'

I must confess these Reasons stagger'd me a good deal : For the *Fall of Rents* and *Lessening the Number of Inhabitants*

habitants are clear and indubitable Marks of a declining State and Condition.

This, then, Mr. MAYOR, being admitted to be the Case, ----- with great Submission I beg Leave to suggest; That it would be perfectly agreeable with your present *Station* and *Character* for you, and your Brother Aldermen, to sit down, and carefully examine into the STATE and CONDITION of this our City; its FOREIGN and DOMESTICK TRADE; and to see if nothing can be done for our *Benefit* and *Relief*.

And here it would not be improper to call in to your Assistance such other Persons as you may judge the *most proper* and *capable*. As the CHAMBER have a great Number of Houses in the City, and likewise a great many more in their *private Capacity*, it, in a *peculiar* and *extraordinary*

ry Manner, becomes their INTEREST to enter heartily into any new Schemes, or Methods, whereby our *lost Inhabitants* may be *regain'd*, and our Houses rais'd to their former Rentals.

BUT this GRAND and IMPORTANT POINT can never be obtain'd by any other Method than by TRADE. It is THAT which must *bring back* our lost Inhabitants, and THAT ALONE must *keep* and *maintain* them when they *are here*.

I have a very good Opinion of our present Set of Merchants. I know them to be Men of Ability, Capacity, and Industry; and am persuaded they will do every thing that can reasonably be expected from them, in order to render our FOREIGN TRADE more considerable and extensive. But alas! in *old beaten Tracks* all Advances and Additions must be *gradually* obtained: In our *present Situation* we want something

thing that would operate *instantly*, in a *Week*, or a *Month*: Something that in an *extraordinary Manner* would be conspicuous and apparent: Something whereby *at vnce* our Houses may be filled with Inhabitants, our Streets crowded with People, our Harbour fill'd with Ships and good hardy Sailors.

And now, Mr. MAYOR, and you Gentlemen of the CHAMBER, let us look around: ---- Let us engage our utmost Attention, and see if nothing of this Kind is within our Reach, whereby those PROSPEROUS and BLESSED EFFECTS may be *easily* and *speedily obtained*.

I was lately amusing myself in the Perusal of some Acts of Parliament that pass'd the last Sessions; and, amongst others, I found an Act, entitled, *A Bill for opening the Port of Yarmouth, and for encouraging a Free*
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and Open Trade between the Kingdom of Ireland and that Port, in the same Manner, subject to the same Laws and Restrictions, as the Port of Bristol, and the other Ports on the North Channel. I must confess, I greedily caught at this Act, and read it again and again with great Pleasure and Attention. It gave me a good deal of Satisfaction to reflect and consider that I had lived long enough to see **T R U T H** and **R E A S O N** at last prevail over *old, blind, and ridiculous Prejudices, founded in Error and Mistake.* And when I further consider'd that every Ship from *Ireland* to *Yarmouth* must necessarily pass within a few Leagues of *Bologne, Diepe, and Calais*, it was natural for me to conclude, that no sensible honest Man could ever, *henceforward*, raise a single Objection against opening **ALL THE PORTS** on the *Southern Shore*; the Shutting up of which for this 20 or 30 Years past has been contrary to all the Rules of

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National Prudence and Policy ; has been of unspeakable Loss and Detriment, both to the Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland* ; and has greatly contributed to keep up, and maintain, a Disposition in the *Irish* to smuggle their Wool to *France*.

The common and general Reason given for shutting up the Ports on the *Southern Coast* has been always founded on a Supposition, *That vast Quantities of Wool were constantly smuggled from England and Ireland to France ; and that should the Irish be permitted to import their Wool in the Southern Ports, it may probably open a Way to a much greater Degree of Smuggling, by reason of their Vicinity to the French Coast.* But this Reason never had any real or just Foundation. It's all Error and Mistake. If the Collectors at the several Ports in *Ireland* be only directed to take GOOD SECURITY on shipping the Wool, and careful to have the
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PROPER RETURNS made within the Time limited by the present Law, there can be no Smuggling this Way.
---- 'Tis *impossible quite.*

I am sensible 'tis also a common Notion, *that a great deal of Wool now is, and has been for Twenty-five Years past, constantly smuggled from England to France.* Many Books and Pamphlets have been wrote to shew the pernicious Tendency of this Trade; and many nonsensical Schemes have been offer'd, and laid before the Publick, in order to *prevent it.*---- I myself very well remember, that about Fifteen or Twenty Years since the Merchants and Manufacturers in our great Trading Towns, such as *Exeter, Tiverton, Taunton, &c. &c. &c.* almost every Session were wont to trouble the Parliament with Petitions, setting forth ' the great
' Decay of the Woollen Trade, and
' that this Declension was entirely owing to the *smuggling of Wool* from
B 2 ' *England*

‘ *England or Ireland.*’ But, I think, for these Seven or Eight Years past they have grown *asham’d* of it. That the Petitioners were right in saying their Trade was in a *sinking* or *declining Way* I will not dispute : But that this Decay was owing the to *smuggling Wool*, either from *England or Ireland*, is what I absolutely deny ; and defy all the Men upon Earth to prove it. No ; the Decay of their Trade was owing to Causes of a very different Nature.

To begin, first, with *ENGLAND*. And notwithstanding all the Noise and Clamour that have been made, Books and Phamphlets wrote, about *smuggling Wool* from *England to France*, it is all *foolish* and *ridiculous* ; for that no such Thing *has existed at all*, during this long Tract of Time. We hear every Day of Tea, Brandy, Silk, Linnen, &c. &c. seized by the Officers in almost all Parts of the Kingdom.

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To smuggle a Cargoe of Wool requires ten times the Men, and ten times the Horses, it does to smuggle a Cargoe of Tea. *One Horse* may carry off Tea to the Value of a *hundred Pounds*. It requires a *Dozen Horses* and *Men* in Proportion to smuggle a *hundred Pounds* worth of Wool. No Commodity is more bulky than Wool. Is it possible it should *always* escape, and that *none* should ever happen to fall into the Hands of the Officers, when Tea, Linnen, and Silk, Commodities abundantly less bulky, are *taken daily*?— The Reason is obvious and plain: *None at all is smuggled*, or *has been* for these twenty or thirty Years past.— If any Wool is smuggled from *England*, it must be from the Counties of *Kent* and *Sussex*. Those Counties in many Respects are more convenient for that Business than *any other*, because of their Vicinity to the *French Coast*, and many other Reasons besides.

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Was a Man to travel in those Counties, and ask five hundred Gentlemen, Merchants, Wool-Growers, or Custom-house-Officers, he would find all those People, tho' of different Professions, to concur and agree in Opinion, *that no Wool is smuggled from thence.*

I don't write this from *common Rumour* or *Report*, but from *my own personal Knowledge* and *Experience*. The Wisdom of our Legislature has thought proper to enact some Laws *peculiar* to those *two Counties*, and different from the rest of the Kingdom. But in *all Parts* of the Kingdom the Laws are so severe as are sufficient to deter any Man in his right Senses (especially if he has fifty Pounds to lose) from ever meddling in it. — When I say no Wool has been smuggled from *England* for these twenty-five Years past, I would not be understood in an *absolute* and *litteral* Sense, that *not a single Bag* has been
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been smuggled in *all* that Time. What I mean is that *no Quantity*, whereby the National Trade may be affected. I don't believe *forty Bags a Year* have been smuggled from the *whole Kingdom*, which is a meer Trifle.

I have now done with *England*; and think I have sufficiently proved (*at least as far as the Nature and peculiar Circumstances of the Thing will admit*) that no Wool has been smuggled from *England* for these twenty-five Years past; and consequently all that has been said, or wrote, about it *since that Time*, is no more nor less than a *ridiculous Chimera*.

I now come to *I R E L A N D*.--- And here I would, first, premise that not a thousandth Part of the Wool, I mean *raw and unmanufactured Wool*, has ever been smuggled from *Ireland*, as the People of *England* have generally imagined.--- The Smuggling Raw Wool

Wool from *Ireland* now is, and ever has been, an *exceeding unpopular Thing*. Was it known publickly that a Merchant in *Dublin, Cork, or Waterford*, was concerned in *smuggling Wool*, neither his Person nor Property would ever be secure a single Day afterwards: The Mob of *Combers* would demolish his House, &c. &c. The Number of *Combers* in *Ireland* are surprizingly great. I have seen a List of those employ'd in *Cork* and Five Miles round it. I was astonish'd at the Number, and forbear to mention it here, fearing I may be suspected to exceed the real Truth. The *Smuggling of Wool* is cutting the Throats, and starving the Families, of all this vast and numerous Body of *Combers*. It's true, when the *Wool* is converted into *Worsted*, the *Combers* are less solicitous about it. They have then got all they can out of it: And those People can't be presum'd to reason in any other Way than as *their own particular Interest* is affected by it. I

I have already mentioned the general Practice of our Trading Towns about fifteen Years past of troubling the Parliament almost every Session about *smuggling Wool*; and the popular Noise and Clamour about it ran so high, that it became necessary that something should be done to quiet the Minds of the People: And accordingly eight new Sloops were *built on Purpose*, and intended to be stationed on the *English* and *Irish* Coast, merely to prevent the Smuggling Wool. But when those Ships were all finished, and fit to put to Sea, the Honourable the Board of Customs were consulted about their Destination. And (if my Information is right) they advised, that all the eight Ships may be stationed on the *Irish* Coast, alledging, they apprehended no Wool was smuggled from *England*, or a meer Trifle; that it was only a *mistaken Notion* People had got in their Heads, without any

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Foundation in Truth or Reality.-----

In consequence of this Advice, they were all ordered to *Ireland*, and had the Officers and Crews of the respective Ships been going to cruize on the Coast of *Mexico* or *Pern*, they could not have gone out in *higher Spirits*. The *common Rumours* and *Reports* in *England* had made them believe that many Scores or rather Hundreds of Ships were passing constantly from *Ireland* to *France*, loaded with Wool, Worsted, and Yarn. This Notion so generally prevailed, that great and very extraordinary Interest was made to be Commanders & Officers in *this Expedition*; which 'twas thought would turn out *a most lucrative and advantageous One*; and the Command of those Ships were given to Persons of considerable Rank and Families.

But those *golden Prospects* did not last long. No sooner were they come to *Ireland*, and the Commanders and
Officers

Officers had conversed with some *Irish* Merchants, and other intelligent Persons, they presently found to their *terrible Mortification*, that the *Noise, Clamour, and common Opinion* in *England*, touching this Affair, was all *false and delusive*. They were told that there really was *Wool and Worsted* sometimes smuggled from *Ireland* to *France*; but that it was *so seldom*, that they may very probably cruize six Months without meeting a single Prize. However, our brave Tarrs were resolved to try what could be done; and a Cruizing they go. The rocky Coast and tempestuous Sea (as the *Irish* is well known to be) did not at all discourage them. They cruiz'd here,--- there,--- and every where,--- all round the Kingdom,— Month after Month,— Time after Time;— but *no Prize at all* appear'd. And those Cruizes were many Times repeated; but all to no Purpose. And I could never learn, after a strict Enquiry, that either of those

eight Ships ever took a *single Prize* during the very long Time they were station'd on the *Irish Coast*.

What was now to be done? The Commanders and Officers on board those Ships were, as before hinted, Gentlemen of Rank. It could hardly be expected they could live on the small Monthly Wages allow'd them by the Crown. As to *Prizes*, both the Officers and the Crews quite despair'd of getting *any thing that Way*. Whereupon the Commanders and Officers thought proper to get a Penny by another Method; and haul'd up their Ships in the *Irish Harbours*, unrigger'd them, discharged a great Number of their respective Crews, and so remained a long time quite in a State of Indolence and Inactivity. The Commanders and Officers of those Vessels knew very well that Wool and Worsted were Commodities of a real and intrinsic Value; Articles that would
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sell at any Time or Place for ready Cash on the Nail. Now, can it enter into the Head of any mortal Man to conceive, that the Commanders and Officers of those fine-sailing Vessels would have remained (*I think it was Three Years*) in the *Irish* Harbours, in such a State of Inactivity, if any *Prizes* could have been taken? It's hardly to be^d presum'd.

Those Ships remaining *so long* in this *inactive Condition* could not fail of raising a fresh Noise and Clamour all over the Kingdom of *England*. And a Number of Certificates, Affidavits, and Representations, were sent up to proper Persons in *London*, all tending to prove, that those Ships had lain in the *Irish* Harbours a Twelvemonth at a Time, without being once at Sea, and consequently could not possibly perform the important Business they were sent out for. — Amongst a Variety of other Representations, the Writer
hereof

hereof sent up one, prepared with a good deal of Pains; though now he confesses, he did not *then understand the Case fully*.

Hereupon the Government plainly saw that those Ships never had been, never would nor could be, of any *real Service*; and so call'd them all Home: And, to satisfy the *Clamour and Noise* of the People, a sort of a Tryal was set up, and Enquiry made into the Conduct of the Commanders of those Vessels. Some of them were reprimanded and censured; and so *this Matter ended*.

The Expence of those Vessels amounted to about forty-seven thousand Pounds a Year (*if my Information is right*), besides the vast Expence in Building and Fitting them out: All which Money was sunk and lost to our poor Nation, without its being Sixpence the better for it.

I would not be understood here to insinuate, that *no raw Wool or Worsted is at all smuggled from Ireland*: I am persuaded and well advised to the contrary. From the North Part of *Ireland* some *raw Wool* certainly goes to *France*; and from some of the Ports in *Ireland* *Worsted* is frequently sent to *France*, in false Package, and of which I have had some recent Proofs.—But what I mean is, that it all goes in *small trifling Quantities*, nothing whereby the *National Trade* can be affected: And whenever the Wisdom of our Legislature shall think proper to make Laws for *Ireland*, of a more coercive Nature, probably this *little Smuggling* which yet *remains* may be entirely annihilated as in *England*. But of this our Superiors are the only proper Judges.

I am very sensible, that if this little Tract falls into the Hands of *five hundred*

dred People, *four hundred and fifty* of them will load the Author with *Censure and Reproach*.— But this is no new Thing. It's what *every Man* must expect who will *defend Truth*, or that has *Honesty and Courage* sufficient to oppose the *commonly received Opinions*, of what Kind or Nature soever.— I expect to be told, that there are many Thousands of People in this Kingdom who have now in their Hands a Number of Books and Pamphlets, that give an Account of this Matter as opposite to my little Narrative as Light is to Darkness; which Thing I will allow to be true.

I believe I may venture to say, I have perus'd *most*, if not *all*, the Books that have been wrote on this Subject for these Fifteen Years past. The far greater Part were wrote and publish'd a few Years preceding the Resignation of the late Sir Robert Walpole. Some *broken Clothiers*, and idle *Journeymen Combers*,

Combers, who would not mind their own Business, Men of the lowest Station and Rank, without *Talents* or *Abilities*, form'd themselves into a little Club at *London*; and took it in their Heads to turn **Schemers**; and from this *drunken Society* sprang a great many Schemes to prevent *Smuggling of Wool*; the most ridiculous and nonsensical that ever the World saw! These People found Means to prevail on some *ignorant Persons* to lay their Schemes before the then Ministry, or at least some Principal Persons in the Administration; who had too much Sense to pay any Regard to 'em. Whereupon *those Gentry* were highly disgusted, and made it their Business to run up and down exclaiming against the Ministry, every where representing that ONE HALF the Wool grown in *England* and *Ireland* was smuggled to *France*, & that the OTHER HALF would soon go the same Way; and also that the Kingdom must be ruin'd and undone

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a few Years, unless *their Schemes* were attended to, and carried into Execution.— This *Drunken Club* were at last bribed in an Ale-house Kitchen Chimney-Corner, by a good Stock of Strong Beer, Pipes, and Tobacco, and sometimes five or ten Shillings dry Money in their Pockets: And from this Place, and in this Condition, was taken from their own Mouths the most *monstrous Absurdities* and *ridiculous Falshoods* that were ever laid before the Publick.— Those Facts, *thus collected*, were put into very able Hands, probably some of the *best Penmen* in *England*, who put the Facts into proper Form and Order, and then reasoned upon them with great Judgment, Clearness, and Perspicuity. But the FACTS and FOUNDATION on which their admirable Reasoning was built were all *notorious Falshoods*, and *monstrous Absurdities*.

In some of those Pamphlets they affirm

firm, with the *utmost* Confidence, that *four hundred thousand Packs of Wool* are *annually* smuggled from *England and Ireland*; which, by the Way, is *more than one Half of the Wool* grown in the Kingdoms of *England, Scotland, and Ireland*.

Amongst a great Number of other Books, at last out comes a notable Performance, pretended to be wrote by a *DRAPER* in *London*. This Book had a surprising Run all over the Kingdom; near ten Thousand were actually publish'd and dispers'd. I took a good deal of Pains to get one of 'em; but could not succeed till it had pass'd *the third Edition*.--- The Writer was certainly a Man of the first Rank for Abilities.— He *labour'd the Point heartily*, and deserved to be *well paid* by those, whoever, that set him at Work. He affirms *most solemnly* that *more than five hundred thousand Packs* were annually smuggled from *England and Ire-*

land to France. But, like all the other Tracts written on this Subject, he does not pretend to offer the least Shadow of PROOF, and nothing more than his own *Ipse dixit*. He mentions *no one Instance*, HOW,--WHERE,---WHEN, ---or BY WHOM, this *amazing Quantity of Wool* should be smuggled. But, *taking this for granted*, he then goes on to make many *wild and romantick Calculations*; and then pretends to demonstrate that the Kingdom of *England* had lost by it, within the Space of a few Years, not a Penny less than *forty-two Millions, good, hard, dry, Sterling Money*.— But in every Page this famous Writer takes proper care to insinuate, that this Smuggling was not carried on thro' *Indolence, Negligence, or Ignorance*, of the then Administration; but that they secretly *connived* at it, with a View to bring speedy Ruin & Destruction on the Kingdom, and to make us all Slaves and Tributaries to *France*. Yet in the Close of
this

this notable Tract, the Writer begins to *abate* a good deal of his Resentment against *Wool-Smuggling*, and seems most sollicitous how, and by what Means, his *Book* may find a general and universal Spread.— He tells his Readers, that whoever would *buy a Dozen* to *give away* should have them at *half Price*; and also that *he himself* had engaged to distribute a *Thousand* in the Country at his own private Expence.

A Ship of Fifty Ton will carry about Sixty Packs of Wool. Now, admitting the Quantity of Wool smuggled yearly to be *Five hundred thousand Packs*, as this Author *solemnly affirms*, it would amount to more than *Eight thousand Cargoes of sixty Packs each*.

The *bare Recital* of this is sufficient to shew the *Absurdity*.— Can it be supposed that upwards of *Eight thousand*

and Cargoes should be smuggled in one Year, and not one of them fall into the Hands of the Officers? However, notwithstanding the monstrous Incredibleity of those Facts, they were greedily swallow'd down, and believed by thousands, and ten thousands, of People, in this Kingdom.

But the plain naked Truth of the Matter is, That all the Books, Pamphlets, Tracts, &c. that were wrote on this Subject for a great many Years preceding the Resignation of the late Sir *Robert Walpole*, were wrote, printed, publish'd, and *industriously spread*, with no other View, or Design, but to increase the *popular Clamour & Resentment* against the then Administration: And the Writers themselves very well knew that the *Facts* they related were the *most notorious Falshoods*, and *monstrous Absurdities*, that were ever laid before the Publick.

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I was assured of this by some Persons of considerable Rank at the Time those Pamphlets appear'd, and such Proofs were given me of it as were demonstrative & conclusive: For since the Resignation of the late Sir *Robert Walpole* scarce a single Tract has been wrote about it.

I am very sensible the little Narrative I now lay before the Publick is in direct Contradiction to all the Books that were wrote on this Subject for Six or Eight Years successively; wherefore I thought it incumbent upon me to mention, *how and by what Means* those Books *crept into the World*, and with what particular *Views and Designs* they were *so industriously dispersed*. And here I do profess, with the utmost Truth and Solemnity, that in the Recital of this Affair I have not the least Design, or Intention, to throw any Oidium or Reproach on those Gentlemen
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who had the Lead, or principal Direction, of the then Opposition : For in this Transaction there is nothing at all new, strange, or wonderful. It's no more nor less than what *all Parties* ever have done, and ever will continue to do, by *each other* ; — or at least till *such Times* as Men shall arrive to a Degree of Understanding superior to that of being *Dupes* and *Asses* to the *Leaders* of their *respective Parties*.

But alas ! this is a State of Things never to be expected ; for, considering the present Temper and Constitution of Mankind, it can hardly be presumed that they should be governed by *Reason, Integrity, and good Sense*. No, certainly : --- 'Tis *Education and Party*, 'tis *Passion, Prejudice*, and a certain *Stubbornness of Mind*, that fixes the Judgment, and *stamps the Opinions* of Men.

And now, Mr. MAYOR, and you
Gentlemen

Gentlemen of the CHAMBER, I have done with the Business of **Smuggling**, & come to the CHIEF THING intended by this Tract, which is to shew the *great Loss and Detriment* sustained by the Kingdoms of *England & Ireland*, by shutting up the PORTS on the *Southern Coast*, and also the *vast Advantage* that would unavoidably accrue to *both Nations* by their being *opened*.

I am sensible every small Port on the Coast would receive more or less Benefit by it.— But as the City of *Ex-ter* is the GRAND METROPOLIS (as one might style it) and EMPORIUM of the *WEST*, and the Bulk of the *Irish* Trade must, and would, center *there*, so I shall confine myself alone to the Consideration *how*, and *in what Manner*, this our City would be affected by it.

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> I am confident that all our *Woollen Manufacturers* in this Part of the Kingdom will most readily concur in Opinion with me, that for many Years past they have laboured under great and unspeakable Difficulties, on Account of the *Dearness of Wool* in the *West of England*; the Price having been greatly beyond the common Run of Trade. There is a certain Rule and Proportion between the Price of *raw Wool*, and when it is *completely manufactured* into Goods: And the Price of our Wool has for many Years greatly exceeded this *Proportion*: And this has been entirely owing to a Want of a *proper and regular Supply*; as all Commodities will bear a Price in Proportion to the *Plenty or Scarcity* of it, and the *Difficulty* that attends the coming at it.

Should a Merchant of *Exeter* order
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for a Cargo of Wool from *Ireland*, he must import it at *Minehead*, as being the *nearest Port* where there is a *constant and regular Succession* of Ships from that Kingdom.

The Charges in landing it at *Minehead* are *extravagantly high*. Their Wharfage, Town Duty, Cartage, Porterage, Cellarage, &c. &c. &c. are, I believe, full as dear as in the Port of *London*, if not dearer. Besides, an *Agent* must be *there* employ'd to open the *large Sea Bags*, to weigh and repack it in *small Packs* for Horse Carriage; which is attended with a deal of Expence. But the *grand Inconveninece* of *all* is still behind, which is the bringing it near Fifty Miles on Horseback; and in the Winter Season it generally comes in a *very wet and dirty Condition*, whereby the Wool is greatly damaged. And many Times it's difficult to get *Horses* to bring it *at all*. These

Inconveniencies, Delays, & prodigious Expences, are sufficient to deter any Merchant from attempting to bring any *Irish* Wool to *Exeter*; the *Want* of which has been of *unspeakable Disadvantage* not only to the City of *Exeter*, but to *all the Country round*, as the Woollen Business is well known to be the *main* and *only Support* of all the *West of England*.

The landing a Sea Bag of Wool, weighing about ten hundred Weight, and bringing it from *Minehead* to *Exeter*, will cost twenty-five Shillings; besides the Delays and Inconveniencies attending it. Now, if this Bag of Wool were landed at *Exeter* Kay, the whole Charge of conveying it from the Ship to the Merchant's Loft would not cost Three Shillings, Passing the Works, Town Duty, and all petty Charges *included*: So that on a single Sea Bag Twenty-two Shillings clean Money

Money would be saved ; which in the Course of a Year to a Merchant that deals largely would amount to a great Saving, besides the vast Conveniency of having his Wool brought to his Loft clean and dry, and in a Condition fit for *immediate Sale*.

I shall probably be told here, that the Freight and Insurance from *Ireland* round Land, and to the Port of *Exon*, would be considerably more than from *Ireland* to *Minehead*, and consequently the Saving not so much as I have represented. I will acknowledge, at first, the *Freight* might be a *small Matter* more : but when a *constant* and *regular Succession* of Ships comes to be established on *this Trade* --- (as would be the Case before the Port had been opened Six Months), --- I am then confident the *Freight* would not be a Farthing more than is *now paid* from *Ireland* to *Minehead*, and as to the
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Insurance, it would never exceed Half *per Cent.* more ; which is but a Trifle, as it amounts to but Five Pounds on a Cargo of a Thousand Pounds Value.

With regard to Worsted, Yarn, Tallow, and other Articles, the Saving and Conveniency to the Importer would be exactly the same as in the Article of Wool.

What an incredible Number of Hands are very usefully employed at *Chester* in Tanning *Irish* Hides ! They are brought from *Ireland* raw in the Hair, and there tann'd and re-exported to *Spain, Portugal, Italy, &c. &c.* and a great Number of Ships are there employ'd in this Business alone.

I have often known the Tanners in *Exeter*, and other Towns adjacent, to have raw Hides from *Ireland* imported at *Bideford*, and brought here *on Horse-*

Horseback; which must be attended with a monstrous Expence. Was our Port *open'd*, we should have Ships constantly passing to and fro, and immense Quantities of Hides would most certainly be imported. And here 'tis worthy our particular Consideration, that eight Parts in ten of those Hides would be re-exported; which would greatly increase our Navigation, and be of unspeakable Benefit to all our Ships trading to *Spain, Portugal, and Italy*.

And here, Mr. MAYOR, and you Gentlemen of the CHAMBER, please to take Notice, all those Hides would pay Passing the Works, and Town Duty, when first imported from *Ireland*; and those very same Hides, when they came to be re-exported, would pay for Passing Works a *second Time* Five Shillings in every hundred Hides; which will be a surprizing Addition

Addition to that Part of your Revenue.

The *Irish* Wool imported some Years by the Merchants of *Tiverton* amounts to a very great Quantity. Was our Port to be opened, I take it for granted they would soon find it abundantly more convenient to have all their Wool landed at *Topsham*, or *Exeter*, than at *Minehead*.--- It's impossible for a Man to calculate exactly the Addition the *Irish* Trade alone would be to the Revenue of the CHAMBER; but, from the nearest Calculation I can make, I am inclined to believe it could not be less than four or five hundred Pounds *per Annum*. Besides, was our Port to be open'd, the present Number of our Ships would be greatly insufficient. *New Ships* would be *built*, and more would be *bought instantly*. Many Ship-masters, with their Families and Effects,

fects, would come from other Ports, and settle here, in hopes of finding Employment; and Sailors would flock hither daily.

What makes me the more sollicitous about this Affair is the Consideration that the Advantages and Benefits arising from it, to all this Part of the Kingdom, is not to be expected, at some *distant* or *remote Period of Time*.

--- No; certainly, within the Space of a *single Year* we should with Pleasure see our lost Inhabitants brought back, our empty Houses repair'd, rebuilt, and occupied; our Streets crowded with People; our Harbour filled with Ships, and brave Sailors.

Another great Advantage would arise from our having a constant and large Supply of *Worsted* and *Yarn*. This would *presently* give Birth to many new Manufactories, and be of

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unspeakable Benefit to those already established. In short; it would render both the Foreign and Domestick Trade of this City and Country vastly more considerable and extensive than it has ever yet been at any former Period of Time.

With regard to *Ireland*, they would find such a constant Demand for *Wool* and *Worsted* from most of the Ports on the *Southern Coast*, as would greatly lessen and abate their *Inclination for Smuggling*, and be one probable Means to *extinguish* and *annihilate* the *little Smuggling* that even yet remains.

I could say a hundred Things more, to shew the vast Advantages that would arise to both Kingdoms by opening all the Ports in *England* at *once*, and laying the Trade *quite free*. But I begin to be tired, and must leave the rest to the Reader's own Suggestions.

However,

However, I hope I shall be thought to have made good my first Assertion, (to wit) *That the Shutting up the Ports of the Southern Coast is contrary to all the Rules of National Prudence or Policy; and also that the Reasons hitherto offered for it are false and delusive; being all founded in Error and Mistake.*

I might here offer many Arguments to shew the Necessity, yea the *absolute Necessity*, our Legislature are at present under in a *peculiar* Manner to give every Part and Branch of our TRADE the utmost Protection and Encouragement, arising from this Consideration alone, That all the Powers in Europe now seem to be awake, and are endeavouring by all possible Means to render the Trade and Commerce of their respective Kingdoms more considerable and extensive; well knowing, that TRADE, and TRADE ONLY,
is

is the Foundation and Source of every Degree of Power, Dominion, and Wealth.---- But this is too copious a Subject for me to enter upon at present.

And, therefore, Mr. MAYOR, and and you Gentlemen of the CHAMBER, I will detain you no longer than only to beg you'll be so kind as to excuse the Length and Freedom of this Epistle, and believe me to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble Servant

FINIS.